

1976-1

## Ard Fheis - 1976 , Reports

Sinn Féin

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### Recommended Citation

Sinn Féin, "Ard Fheis - 1976 , Reports" (1976). *Materials*. 54.  
<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/workerpmat/54>

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# SINN FEIN ARD FHEIS

JANUARY 1976.

## INTRODUCTION:

Since the middle sixties we have continued to develop in consciousness and in real strength. We have had on one hand to continually fight the Provisionals and the damage they have done through their activities and indeed their very existence. At the same time we have had to wage many struggles internally to fight to maintain our basic programme and strategy. This past year in particular, as all of you well know, has not been without its problems and its tragedies. The loss of valued comrades, the assaults on and the intimidation of others coupled with a campaign of distortion and disruption waged by sections of the Press on behalf of the IRSP has seen to that.

The fact that the IRSP gang have now been exposed to our members is a good thing but we have paid a dear price for the education of some people. Even today there are still people who claim membership of this organisation who would claim that not all the IRSP gang or P.A. are bad. They seem to think, and say so, that we have misjudged the IRSP and also the P.A. and that this is some quarrel between Irishmen, between republicans, in which they are not involved. Before we go any further and begin to tackle the many other problems that we face, we must all be clear as to where we stand as an organisation and as individuals on this whole question of the Provisional Alliance and the IRSP.

Many years ago we characterised, correctly, the Provisionals as an alliance of Right Wing Catholic militaristic Nationalists being used and exploited by the leading political and business elements of Ireland, Fianna Fail mostly. They are seen by many supporters and particularly many roman clergy as a Catholic army, an anti Protestant force and nothing else. On occasions they have been manipulated by the Ultra Left such as the P.D. and other anarchist Trotskyist groups, which accounts for the odd moment of Socialist wordage they have mouthed. We stated, time after time that the Provisionals could not succeed, (even, at the height of their apparent power, the MacGiolla speech at Carrickmore 1972) that they had not got the politics or the programme to win even their limited objectives, which when analysed come down to nothing more than an extension of the Free State to the 32 Counties.

The fact that at times this dictum was forgotten and neglected was due in the main to the internal pressures created by unstable elements who had remained or joined after the split of 1969/70. On some occasions we were blackmailed into accepting certain situations, but despite the fact that we had at the centre a traitor, a man who was prepared and did refuse to implement policies, not in any open fashion, a man who conducted a whispering campaign against leadership and policies, who indulged in character assassination and who made a determined effort, over the past years, in particular, to subvert or destroy the Movement, we managed to come through, by discipline, trust and consciousness. We have, despite all, remained true to our basic programme and strategy, Socialist revolution in the 32 Counties involving the mass of the people, the working class.

We now have a clearly defined theoretical ideology with a clear political aim and a programme and policy which we know to be correct. Economic and political resistance in all and every field that affects working people.



That part of our programme relating to the unity of the working class still forms the key role. Despite the sneers and jeers directed at this fundamental for revolution in this country, from the far right to the ultra left, who claim that the policy is impossible, impracticable and bound to fail, we have seen from our history that the division of the working class is the rock upon which every effort to achieve freedom and socialism has foundered. The fact that today the working class is still deeply divided is proof only that our policy never got a chance to be applied. The Fianna Fail government and the Provisionals and now the IRSP gang have seen to that on one side while the British Army and the Paisley-Craig-Faulkner-West gang saw to it on the other side.

But now that the decks have been cleared, that we have rid ourselves of the opportunists, the instant revolutionaries, the sectarian bigots, the traitors and the deceivers who formed the IRSP gang and also the cowards who fled, not to greener but to safer pastures, we can recommence the task of the making of the Irish Revolution. Lenin said *"Better fewer but better"* and if we accept this in its true and real meaning then we will have begun once more to advance.

There have then been various responses to the challenge that faces revolutionaries of this period. Some people have put their faith in what is loosely termed 'spontaneous mass struggle' and have as a result of this error given support to the Provisionals in their bombing campaign. They hope that somehow out of the chaos will come the possibility of revolutionary change. As we have seen, out of the chaos there is likely to emerge even deeper divisions of the working class with consequent advantage to the rulers of Ireland and Britain only.

On the other hand, there are those who favour a loosely organised movement in which all the elements with a generally similar basis of approach could work together. They impose upon themselves serious limitations, the principal one being that they can aim for only those objectives upon which they agree and the objectives are necessarily the broadest, vaguest and least definite that can be admitted by forces which might in different circumstances work in opposition to each other.

We are seeking the ingredient which will by the relationship it holds to all elements of the revolutionary struggle, make unbreakable links with the people's demands and produce an unbeatable combination of organisation and consciousness. It is obvious that as one looks to the failures of the past, the roots of the Republican organisations' difficulty has been in political, educational and agitational organisation which limited our capacity to take advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves.

We have seen in the operation of the Provisionals the failure of a military elite to win the support of the people. This, apart from their total disregard of and failure to involve in any way, the Protestant working class, along with their terror tactics is a major element in the present threatening situation in the Six Counties and the confusion that exists in the Twenty-Six Counties. That some individuals or cliques still refuse to learn from all this is every evident with the formation of the terrorist IRSP group. There is little more that one can say about this gang that has not already been said, except to note that it is a long time since such unprincipled and opportunist elements ranging from the lunatic left to the right got together anywhere in the world. We said on their formation last year that we were confident that such a combination would not go anywhere but would, because of the motley crew that made it, finish eating each other up as they have begun to do.

One thing is certain, their defeat, but even in that they serve the establishment for just, as the Provisionals by their activities and defeat have debased and devalued the name and content of Republicanism so the IRSP will endeavour to do the same with the concept and philosophy of Socialism and Republicanism. From the Americas to Asia, from Africa to Europe only the ruling class has gained from terror campaigns. The aim and purpose of the IRSP to have a more selective and refined Provisional bombing and assassination campaign must be exposed, resisted and defeated.



# SECRETARY'S REPORT

SINN FEIN ARD FHEIS January 1976.

The Ard Comhairle met 9 times during the year. The record of attendance of each member is set out below:

Tomas Mac Giolla	9	Des O Hagan	5
Sean O Cionnaith	9	Fergus Reynolds	5
Tony Heffernan	9	Jimmy McKeon	4
Andy Smith	8	Malachy McGurran	4
Mairin de Burca	8	Joe Sherlock	4
Tom Moore	8	Brian Gibbons	4
Eamon Smullen	8	Jackie Ward	4 +
Cathal Goulding	7	Liam McMillen	3
Sean Garland	7	Brendan Lynch	3
Ciaran Bradley	6	Mick Dunphy	3
Francie Donnelly	6	Mick Ryan	2 +
Brian Brennan	6	Kevin Lenihan	2
Kitty O'Kane	6	Micky Montgomery	2
D. MacRaghnaill	6	Des Gourley	1
Jim Sullivan	5	Brend. MacGearailt	0

- + Jackie Ward dropped out of the Movement in August.
- + Mick Ryan received special leave of absence from his position on the Ard Comhairle to concentrate on other organisational activity.

As can be seen from the above the attendance record of some of the regional delegates was particularly poor. Regional areas, when selecting representatives, should ensure that they select a person who is available to travel to Dublin to the Ard Comhairle meetings. Regional representatives should report on Ard Comhairle meetings to their areas and explanations should be given for failure to attend meetings.

The following officers were appointed by An tUachtaran and ratified by the first full meeting of the Ard Comhairle:

Vice Presidents: Malachy McGurran - Joe Sherlock.  
Ard Runaithe: Tony Heffernan - Mairin de Burca.  
Treasurer: Donnchadha MacRaghnaill,  
Director of Organisation: Sean Garland,  
Director of Publicity: Sean O Cionnaith.  
Director of Economic and Industrial Research: Eamon Smullen.  
Director of Education: Des O Hagan.  
Director of International Affairs: Sean O Cionnaith.

The Coisde Seasta, made up of the officer board and available members of the Ard Comhairle met on 47 occasions during the year.

The past year has been one of the most difficult in recent times for the Movement. In addition to the generally stagnant political situation North and South of the border, our members in Belfast came under attack from IRSP and Provisional murder gangs. Seven members including Ard Comhairle member, Liam McMillen were murdered and many more wounded.



The resulting situation in which much of the time of the Ard Comhairle had to be devoted to discussing the attacks on our members, and in which members in various areas had to concentrate on protecting their lives, made political progress very difficult.

The Movement contested two elections during the past year - the Galway West Bye-Election in March and the Convention Elections on May 1st. The vote in Galway, 656 first preferences, was not as high as we had hoped, but this constituency had not been contested for many years and the experience and contacts made during the election campaign will be of great assistance in the future to our relatively young organisation in the area.

The Convention election results were particularly disappointing in view of the effort put into the campaign by most areas. There is no doubt that our vote was badly affected by the IRSP attacks which culminated in the assassination of Liam McMillen three days before polling day. The national newspapers, with their customary lack of regard for the truth, insisted on describing the attacks as a "feud" and a "gang war" at a time when our public image was most important. Another factor was of course the widespread and blatant intimidation campaign waged by the Provisionals against those who wished to vote.

Despite the difficulties of the past year, progress has been made in a number of important areas. The Six County Executive of Republican Clubs which had effectively ceased to function in the previous year, was reactivated and the Six County Secretariat was set up in the early part of this year. Sean O Cionnaith spent from January until September in the North, mainly in Belfast but also in Derry for a short while. The Six County Secretariat, with its office in Belfast functioned very effectively during the year particularly in relation to publicity and its value was most obvious during the Provisional pogrom in October and November. The policing document was produced by the Secretariat and received widespread comment in the North. We were the only organisation to produce a detailed policy on policing, and our action forced other groups to adopt a public position on this vital issue, even if many of their "policies" were lifted directly from our document. The Clubs also carried out a fairly widespread campaign on sectarianism. Over 100,000 leaflets were produced, posters were put up and public meetings held in many areas. Again while others talked about the evils of sectarianism, we were the only organisation to have done something constructive to end it. The Six County Executive meetings have been fairly well attended and contact between the Clubs and the Secretariat Office in Belfast, where John Hunter is employed full time, has been maintained.

In accordance with the resolution passed at the last Ard Fheis, the Ard Comhairle, after full consultation with the Northern organisation, instructed the Republican Club Councillors to take their seats at the November Council meetings. Most of the Councillors are still 'finding their feet' and it is too early to assess what impact they will have on the Councils.

In the 26 Counties some of our Councillors did an excellent job in forwarding and publicising the policies of the Movement. Others were less active and maintained little or no contact with the head office. It is clear that there is a need for regular meetings of all Councillors, although when these were organised in the past it was impossible to get a full attendance of our local representatives.



In the early part of 1975 a small committee was established by the Coisde Seasta to examine the present role of youth in the Movement and to make recommendations as to the desirability and feasibility of establishing a political youth movement. The Committee reported to the Ard Comhairle in December, and a resolution based on its recommendations appears on the Clar.

In the Autumn the National Women's Committee was re-activated in accordance with the resolution passed at last year's Ard Fheis. An Officer Board was elected and the Committee includes women from most of the main urban areas of the country. A pamphlet, *"The Rights of Women in Ireland"* has been published and a number of press statements issued. On the first working day of 1976 a picket was placed on the Department of Labour in Dublin, to protest at the Government's decision to abandon their commitment to introduce equal pay. Pat Browne represented the Movement at the International Women's Conference that was held in the German Democratic Republic in October and Peigin Doyle attended the International Conference of Young Women in Moscow, also held in October.

## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

ARD FHEIS January 1976.

Education continues to progress slowly and it is evident that in the areas of greatest general Movement activity, enthusiasm for increasing members' understanding is highest.

For example, Belfast, South Down and Dublin have maintained continuous contact with the Head Office and the Director of Education. This reflects the general level of activity locally and consequently the involvement of Head Office in these areas. Numerous courses were held in the three districts and tours of Belfast, South and North Down undertaken by the Director. The themes for these tours in the main dealt with Republicanism, Socialism, Sectarianism and the splinters from the Movement.

A similar series of lectures were held in Tyrone and Sth. Derry (twice) and while the general level of understanding of Party policies is high in these areas, this is not reflected in activity.

Specialist lectures were held in Derry City, Lurgan, Belfast and Newry, organised either by Padraig Yeates or the Director.

Outside of Dublin educational weekends were held in Wexford, Enniscorthy, Kerry and Cork. The low level of educational activity and lack of demand on Head Office is a clear comment on the imbalance of the Movement's activity in North/South terms.

### MORNINGTON:

Unlike the previous year, Mornington was in almost continual use throughout the Summer. Again the districts availing of the facilities were almost entirely from the North, apart from the Dublin Education officers. Belfast clubs and their Comhairle Ceanntair seized every opportunity to send both members and education officers to the school. Tyrone had one small school and there was one additional school for the North West Executive.

The future of the school is a matter for every member of the Movement and not only Head Office. We have purchased sufficient land at Mornington to build a purpose built college and it has been decided in principle that this project should go ahead.

Clearly the question of finance is central to the issue, if the sort of premises necessary are to be erected which would cater for our needs throughout the year; lecture and study facilities, kitchens, toilets etc., which could be used not only by individuals but families. Head Office will not achieve this on its own.

It would seem to be advisable also to consider asking representatives of other organisations to sit on the management committee of the new college if it is to achieve its aim of becoming a decisive influence on significant sections of the Irish working class.

### PUBLICATIONS:

Apart from the wide number of pamphlets now available to education officers, the new members' handbook and the basic series of education lectures will be available next month. Lists of fundamental literature have been already circulated and there is readily available additional books which an eager educational officer can use to supplement reading and improve discussions and talks. To which must be added the weekly Irish People and the United Irishman.



### FOGHLUIM:

Following a decision of the National Education Committee it was decided to republish *Foghlaim*, which would contain lecture material either from central or local sources. So far Padraig Yeates, Secretary of the Education Committee, has issued two issues at a cost which covers expenses. It is hoped that four issues will be distributed annually; the subscription will be £1. payable in advance.

### NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

The committee met irregularly throughout the year, attendance once again reflecting commitment. It may be that the time chosen for the meetings was unsuitable but as the meetings were bi-monthly it is incredible that some areas were never represented.

An effective committee depends on all areas sending delegates when requested, replacing those who are unwilling to or unable to attend. The work of the National Education Committee in organising lectures, tours etc, requires the fullest possible representation. Without this it will exist only in name.

### The Future:

Although it should be now clear to all that organisations like the Provisional Alliance and the IRSP are vicious aberrations from Republicanism, there is sadly still educational work to be done at this level. Such remedial activity must be continued and it is vital that new members be under no illusions as to the politics of the Party they are seeking to join.

At the same time if the Party is to grow in Republican consciousness, next year must be devoted to the intensive study of the socialist classics.

All education officers (in fact all members) cannot contribute to the work of the Republican Movement unless they accept that education proceeds by way of hard, intensive study. Knowledge, of the sort the Party requires, does not descend from heaven or any other place for that matter. There are no short cuts to becoming a conscious Republican activist.

Finally, there is the need to establish educational contact with the people. Every cumann in the country should have a weekly bookstand. The cost is negligible and the result incalculable. All Education Officers should consider this to be a fundamental part of their activity in the coming year.



# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

## REPORT

SINN FEIN ARD FHEIS January 1976.

The task of the International Affairs Bureau, under its Director Sean O Cionnaith, is to inform international opinion about the aims of the Republican Movement in order to win solidarity and support throughout the world. This involves every form of contact from publishing the regular monthly "EOLAS" to organising tours abroad for speakers from the Movement as well as briefing visiting representatives of Liberation Movements throughout the world and foreign journalists.

I intend to deal with the main work of the Bureau during the past year. "Eolas", the monthly news digest distributed by the Bureau to 1,700 contacts throughout the world is three years old this month. The mailing list - which added 700 new contacts this year - to reach its 1,700 contacts - includes Liberation Movements, Embassies, Solidarity Groups, Press people and individuals throughout the world. It represents the most important constant line of contact between the Movement and public opinion outside of Ireland and England. Its editorials are frequently carried in magazines and political publications throughout the world.

The contacts maintained through "Eolas" helped make the Anti-Imperialist Festival of 1974 a reality but I should deal here with the most spectacular proof of its value to the Movement. Within four days of the beginning of the Provisional pogrom in Belfast in October last year 1,700 copies of "Eolas" with detailed descriptions of the Provisional attack were in the post. As a result, for the first time ever since the beginning of the crisis in the North, international public opinion was made aware of a contemporary event in Ireland and given time to respond to that situation. The result was impressive - intense pressure on the Provisional leadership from the United States which contributed substantially to ending the attack, no fewer than 70 messages of solidarity from support groups in countries like Vietnam, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Puerto Rico, to mention but a few, and a response in cash support for the Belfast Victims' Fund exceeding £2,000. Many groups like the North German workers' group, published the details in "Eolas" in full in their magazines. For the first time, thanks to "Eolas" hundreds of left-wing political groups of varying nationalities got a first hand look at the true counter-revolutionary nature of the Provisionals.

These particular editions of "Eolas" were also sent to Cumainn and Clubs throughout the country to help keep our members fully informed of developments. Two special editions - one dealing with an analysis of "Ultra Left Adventurism in Ireland", the other dealing with the origins and policies of the Provisionals - were also distributed to all Cumainn and Clubs. These particular editions of "Eolas" therefore give some idea of the tremendous value of the monthly digest as an organiser of international solidarity. Normally such a department would have to be subsidised but I can report that "Eolas", which costs £200 per month to print and distribute, pays its own way through its fighting fund and the annual raffle which it organises.



Tours abroad organised by the International Affairs Bureau included this year a tour of Iceland by An tUachtaran, Tomas Mac Giolla, a tour of Wales by Des O'Hagan, Director of Education and Editor of the United Irishman, a tour of Portugal by John Hunter of the Six County Secretariat, the presence of Peigin Doyle, Editor of the Irish People in Moscow to represent the Movement at the International Conference of Young Women, the attendance in New York of the Director of the Bureau, Sean O Cionnaith, for the 4th Annual Conference of Republican Clubs of U.S.A. and Canada and the attendance in Canada of Dennis Cassin at the World Peace Movement Conference. Through the International Affairs Bureau the Republican Movement was also represented at a conference on Puerto Rico held in Cuba and had representatives in Ghana and Vietnam. In all these cases fresh contacts were made and literature and other documents descriptive of the Republican Movement circulated.

Thanks to one of these representative visits abroad, that of Gerry McAlinden to Brittany, the Republican Movement is a signatory to the Declaration of Brest which represents a consensus view of imperialism by Catalonians, Basques, Galicians, Bretons and Irish people. We are also represented on the Chile Solidarity Committee.

Future activities include the holding of two international conferences this coming summer along the lines of the anti-Imperialist Festival of 1974. One will concern itself with Multi-Nationals and the other with the National Liberation Struggle in Ireland. Further details will be announced in due course.

In the course of this year the issue of improving publicity internally in this country will be actively taken up. The issue of "Pogrom" after the Belfast Provisional attack demonstrates the value of good communications and the capacity. As Director of Publicity the Director of the International Affairs Bureau is responsible in this field also. The publicity during the Convention Elections - despite the poor result - was good as also was the press relations during the Provo pogrom. But the establishing of such press contact on a more organised basis will be proceeded with this year.

Part of this programme will be the encouragement of local newsletters, some of which - like the Galway People, Ballymurphy News, Republican Worker of Cork and the Plough of Newry, are doing excellent work in their own areas.

In conclusion, the leadership, in commending the work of the International Affairs Bureau during the past year, sees it as a vital component in maintaining and extending links with revolutionary groups throughout the world.



## ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

### DEPARTMENT

SINN FEIN AND FHEIS January 1976.

The Economic and Industrial Research Department was established by Sinn Fein so that very exact knowledge on what is happening in the economy should be available to the Movement. This knowledge would then make it possible for the Movement to work out economic policies based on the realities of a situation and not by the method of trial and error nor by an emotional response to some particular situation.

Original research in certain sectors of Irish economic life has enabled the movement to publish studies of various aspects of economic developments which can be described as pioneering research work in this country.

The Movement was first with the publication of a study of the oil and gas resources of this state. It gave details of the method by which giant, vastly powerful oil companies have decided to loot our Irish oil and natural gas resources at super profits to themselves. We have exposed the wasteful methods of recovery proposed by these firms which will mean that a substantial part of a resource will remain in the ground, in some cases lost beyond the possibility of recovery by present techniques.

We have named Irish people in business and in government who make possible this looting of our natural resources.

Our work differs from other studies of such matters - when indeed any study is made at all - by taking the best interests of the Irish people as a whole as a guideline for a policy on a particular matter. This country needs 45,000 new jobs each year (that figure applies, of course, to all Ireland) if we are to have full employment; so when we examine any part of the national economy it is with a view to finding the necessary jobs.

The Movement has published a study of the public sector of the Irish economy and it is the first defence of this much maligned stable factor in our economic life. The study pointed out that the reverse is true of the cultivated version of the story of the public sector. The private sector of the economy does not support the public sector; the public sector supports the private sector. One in five persons in employment in this state works for the state sector and the lion's share of gains made by their work is taken by the banks.

Our document, just published, on the Irish money market is another piece of pioneering work. We give details of the manner in which the banks kill off all business, all local enterprise, which is not regarded by them as a good 'risk', as a good source of quick, short-term super profit.

We have been blamed - when we advocate the restructuring of Irish industry along lines which will enable it to exist in the modern world - that we are not interested in the human problem of a person having a job in the short term. Our document shows that the banks kill jobs without any consideration for human problems either in the short term or in the long term.



The study of certain sections of industrial life, for example, the car-assembly industry, the textile industry, the boot and shoe industry or the building industry - all depressed sections of the economy - is not possible in a serious way without first making a study of certain key factors - banks, natural resources and the possibility in the state sector of the economy, the extension of the state sector into industry generally.

Another aspect of the work of the economic side of the Movement is the supplying of detailed information of profits, ownership and other interests of capitalists who are engaged in industrial struggle with their workers, one or another form of struggle with their workers. We would like all trade unionists to know that this service from our Movement is available to them.



The United Irishman, financially, at this moment, is in the red, this, mind you, despite the fact that if it got paid, it would be £5,000 to credit. As I said this state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue: the sacrifices of our comrades in the past year and previously cannot be thrown away by irresponsible people who refuse to carry out their duty to the Movement and to each other by paying for whatever items they get from H.Q.

Padraig McCallig, one of the oldest serving members of the Movement, deserves a special word of congratulations. For the past few months he has carried out experimental sales in Donegal with highly successful results. It is hoped to establish a full time team to travel certain areas of the country to not alone sell the U.I. but to hold public meetings on the many important issues confronting the people at this time.

Once again, money is one of the major obstacles to the implementation of this idea.

#### *The Irish People:*

The Irish People, our weekly publication, continues to hold its position. As stated last year we failed to make the breakthrough in this field due to the stranglehold firms like Easons hold on distribution and circulation. Nevertheless the leadership are satisfied that the Irish People does fulfil a very important role in our overall strategy. Its influence extends far beyond its buyers for it is geared to a very important and vital area of this country, industry and the organisations of the people. Much more could be done by members and cumann in helping to expand the sales of the Irish People. Some areas and members, just like the U.I. experience, have shown that there is a consistent sale for the Irish People.

Efforts are constantly being made to improve our publications in every respect. To this end late last year we began to organise a conference on the question of publications. It was intended to make the conference representative of the country, unfortunately, here again the Provisionals attacks on our members in Belfast disrupted this work and the conference had to be postponed. It is intended to re-convene the conference at the earliest opportunity.

#### *Clo Naisiunta:*

Clo Naisiunta, our printing department was one of the busiest sections last year. From the production of local newsletters to leaflets setting out our policy in the fight against sectarianism, against unemployment and for jobs in support of the refinery in Dublin Bay. Many new pamphlets were added to our Repsol stock covering such issues as Finance, Resources, The Public Sector, Women's Rights, a tribute to Liam McMillen and many others giving the movement's stand on such questions as our Historical Tradition, International Obligations and what the Demands and needs of the Irish People are now.

We will be producing at least 6 new pamphlets in the next couple of months dealing with New Members classes, Education Officer's Manual, The Origins of the Provisionals, the Republican Congress and one incorporating previous Report and Policy decisions of this and previous Ard Fheiseanna.



Repsol pamphlets dealing with all aspects of Movement policy and activity now cover a very wide range from the period of the United Irishmen '*Let the Nation Stand*' to the latest '*The Banks*' which documents the control and role of finance capital has in this country.

There can be no excuse for any member who is not fully aware of where the organisation stands on all the many questions that affect the Irish people. These pamphlets, which are available from the U.I. bookshop, along with the United Irishman and the Irish People give more than adequate direction to our members as to how and who to fight.

We believe that along with the large increase in pamphlets and other material there has been a tremendous improvement in the standard of the work produced; and that has been achieved with a limited staff with very limited resources and machinery which, to say the least, has seen better days and which needs to be replaced; this brings us to the question of printing generally and we cannot talk of printing without discussing the question of the United Irishman and money with which to purchase machinery not alone to print pamphlets but also to endeavour to purchase machinery which is also capable of printing the United Irishman as well. But one of the major problems connected with and preventing the expansion of the printing department is money: money for payment of the goods produced by the department and money for sold copies of the United Irishman.

We are currently examining ways in which we can lease or buy our own Printing Plant. This involves a very large sum of money but if we are serious about building a revolutionary organisation then we need and must have control of our newspaper publication from beginning to end.

More and more members are going to have to become totally involved in giving their time, their talents and their money to this Party if we are going to succeed.



SINN FEIN ARD FHEIS

JANUARY 1976.

Report on Prisoners:

There are now one hundred and thirty members of the Movement in Jails in the 6 Counties, the 26 Counties and in Britain. The cost of maintaining the dependents of the prisoners in a reasonably decent standard of living, along with providing parcels for the prisoners themselves and other ancillary costs, is substantial.

It is the duty of every member of the Movement to do all they can to support the prisoners and their dependents by collections, selling raffle tickets and running functions such as ceilidhe, dances, bazaars and the like.

Today it is them, tomorrow it could be any person who is here.

CABHAIR:

The Committee of Cabhair are to be congratulated on the magnificent work they have done over the last years.

We particularly remember those of our comrades who are serving long prison terms in particular Noel Jenkinson, sentenced to 30 years, in English prisons. We must all assist the Cabhair Committee to make the name and the case of Noel Jenkinson known to the world. Everything we can do must be done to raise the money for his appeal to the international court of human rights in Strasbourg, and any other effort which will help to end this republican's terrible sentence.



STRUCTURE COMMITTEE REPORT  
SINN FEIN ARD FHEIS JANUARY 1976.

After the Ard Fheis of 1974/75 the Ard Comhairle established a Committee to once again examine structure and organisation.

Going on the lessons learned during the lifetime of the last Structure Committee it was decided to keep the Committee small and have it deliver its report within 6 months. The Committee met twice before the I.R.S.P. gang, through their activities, disrupted its work. It was not until August that the Committee met again to resume its work. It met a few times and had begun to draft up certain proposals for presentation to regional meetings when the Provisionals began their murder campaign against our members. The Committee has not met since October and while a certain amount of groundwork has been done many questions still remain to be discussed by the Committee.

A problem is in regards to Committee members having time, for whilst it was stated that members of the Committee should not be too involved in other work, this is not very practical.

More members recognise the importance of Structure and Organisation and the need for changes but very few can bring forward practical proposals to deal with the situation.

Taking account of the fact that the organisation as presently constituted, must continue to exist and work and that any changes proposed have to take account of this, is only the beginning of the problem. Again, forms of organisation suitable for large population urban areas may not, and usually are not, suitable for rural areas or small towns with scattered membership.

To this end a Conference is being organised for the Western Area, that is from Donegal to Kerry, which will be held in Galway the end of this month. Its purpose will be to examine and discuss with members the problems and difficulties of organisation and structure in their area. We are hopeful that we can arrive at some positive conclusion.

It is the intention of the Structure Committee to remain in existence and to complete their work as soon as is possible. I do not think it is feasible at this point to put a time limit on the Committee's work. The incoming Ard Comhairle should, within a month or 6 weeks after the Ard Fheis, ask the Structure Committee for a full report on its intentions.

As we stated last year if we are to use occasions like Ard Fheiseanna constructively then we must be realistic. Over the past 10 years we have taken practical steps to involve the people in what is their liberation struggle, to educate them as to how best to fight and win. In this we have already enjoyed some success. The people's awareness of their problems and of the failure of traditionally capitalist solution is increasing daily in all parts of the country.

We have made the centre point of this Ard Fheis, Peace, Work and Class Politics, for we believe that around these vital issues most people can be organised today. Each of these issues are related not only to each other but to all the other problems that beset our country, the fight for Resources, Women's Rights, Hospital Services, for a Bill of Rights against Sectarianism, Transport Services, and as many more.

The next twelve months may see elections in either State in Ireland, we must begin now the preparation for these elections. Put our organisation more closely in touch with the people North and South and in turn advance the education of our members.

We must continue to contest elections as tactical and organisational considerations dictate, but we must pay more attention to the selection of candidates. We must approach the area of struggle as we would any other area, paying particular attention to the overall activity, strength and organisation of the party, the standing of our candidates among the people and work to a co-ordinated plan over a period in any particular constituency.

Those few in our organisation who today peddle a pessimistic note or ask what can be done should be given short shrift. In most cases they are attempting to excuse their lack of commitment to our programme, their own laziness. They seek to infect others with their own disease. Let us remember that in times of crisis and difficulties for capitalism, there are many opportunities for the Revolutionary Party. There is no area of this country, no section of its population which cannot be organised in the struggle for change. We must be involved in all areas of Irish life.

The role of the revolutionary party of the 1970's is central to the politics of Ireland at this time. It must apply a class analysis adopting a democratic working class position on all issues, North And South, it must analyse the differences and similarities of the situation in the 6 Counties and the 26 Counties and provide a programme which, while recognising the integrity and unity of this island, recognises also the peculiar difficulties facing the working people in different areas. There is in the 6 Counties an immediate need for the defence of the working class against the forces of imperialism and the forces of sectarianism, as there is in the 26 Counties a need for defence against the more subtle forces of economic domination especially when they are given immediate physical manifestation through the army of the state and the police.

One of the major tasks which faces the party is the building of a National Liberation Front in which the working class and their organisations will play the leading role. This Liberation front can only be built by uniting with all those people who are affected by imperialism and capitalism in all aspects of their lives. The major role in the Liberation Front will be played by the Republican Movement but people of good will and organisations democratically representing the workers in their sectional interests cannot be excluded, provided they accept the programme of the Front and the necessity to implement that programme without delay.

Finally, the party because it is based on the people's demands will not be susceptible to deflection, betrayal or opportunistic change and because it is organised on truly democratic principles it will reflect the will of the people through its members. Because it is furnished with a programme of progress as a strong and efficient organisation it will not be cracked or swayed by the surface winds of change. Because it is inevitable it will succeed.